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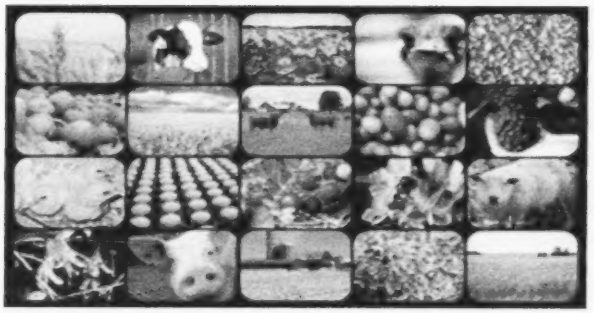
Nova Scotia leads Atlantic Canada in corn and apple area



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. not available for any reference period
.. not available for a specific reference period
... not applicable
0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p} preliminary
^{r} revised
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E} use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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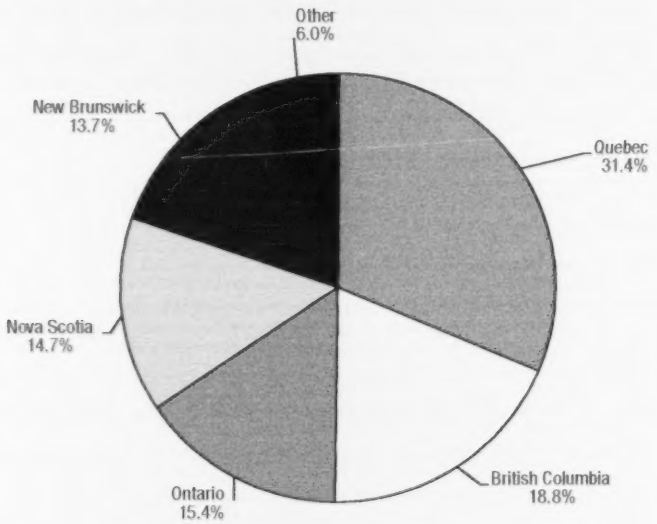
Nova Scotia leads Atlantic Canada in corn and apple area

There were about one-tenth fewer farms and farm operators in Nova Scotia in 2016 from five-years earlier. Nova Scotia reported the oldest average age of farm operators (56.5 years) nationally. Women accounted for over one-quarter of all farm operators in the province, the highest proportion in Atlantic Canada.

Despite a decrease, Nova Scotia continued to have the fourth largest area of fruits, berries and nuts in the country. Fruit and tree nut type operations accounted for over a quarter of farms in the province and were the third largest in terms of gross farm receipts generating $96.1 million.

Poultry and egg production was the largest farm type in terms of sales, accounting for over one-quarter of gross farm receipts in the province in 2015.

Chart 1
Provincial distribution of area of fruits, berries and nuts, 2016



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: CANSIM table 004-0214.

Nova Scotia reported the largest breeding stock of mink in Canada in 2016. However, breeding stock was down by over 40% from five-years earlier.

The area for corn for grain rose by nearly one-half from 2011 and was the largest corn for grain area in Atlantic Canada in 2016.

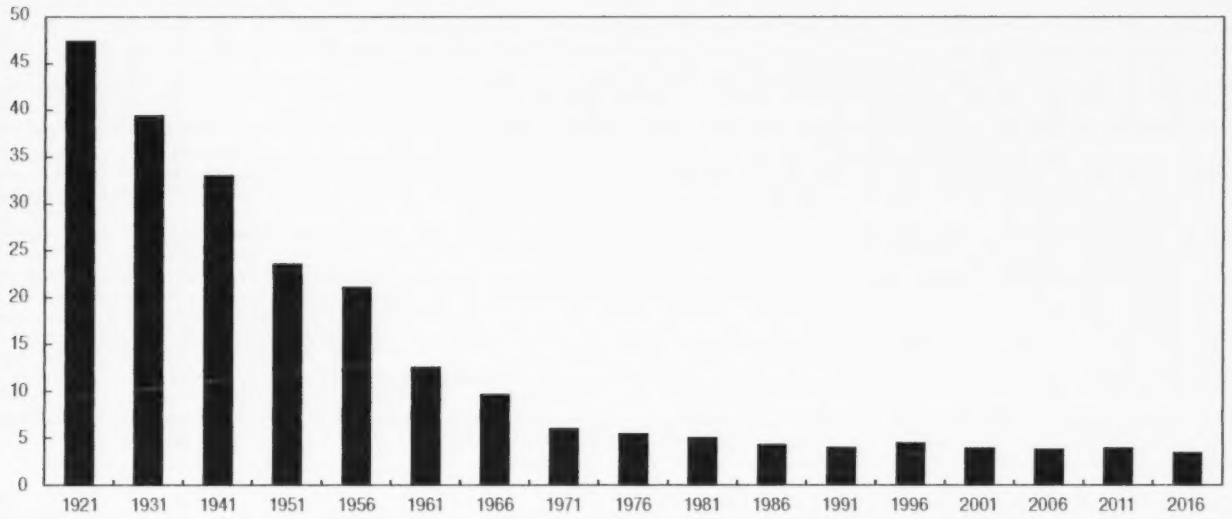
Primary agriculture represented 0.8% of provincial gross domestic product (agricultural GDP) in 2013. This percentage increased to 4.0% when agricultural input and service providers, primary producers, food and beverage processors, and food retailers and wholesalers industries were taken into account (Statistics Canada. 2013. Special tabulation, based on 2013 gross domestic product by industry – provincial and territorial).

Agricultural operations in Nova Scotia employed 7,948 people in 2015.

The number of farms down from 2011

The 2016 Census of Agriculture counted 3,478 census farms in Nova Scotia, down 10.9% from 2011, a higher decline than the national average of 5.9%.

Chart 2
Total number of agricultural operations, Nova Scotia, 1921 to 2016



Sources: CANSIM tables 004-0002 and 004-0204.

Declines in cropland, pasture and woodlands cause total farm area to drop

The total farm area over which farmers had stewardship in Nova Scotia decreased 10.1% from 2011 to 915,657 acres in 2016. In particular, cropland (-4.8%), pasture (-20.8%) and woodlands (-10.5%) area were all down.

While the total farm area fell, average farm size grew from 261 acres in 2011 to 263 acres in 2016. This five-year period saw shifts of area away from hay and horticultural production to field crops as a result of fewer cattle and the increased profitability of field crops.

Total farm area, which is land owned or operated by an agricultural operation, includes:

- cropland;
- summerfallow;
- improved and unimproved pasture;
- woodlands and wetlands;
- all other land (including idle land, and land on which farm buildings are located).

Table 1
Components of cropland in percentage, Nova Scotia, 2011 and 2016

	Percent of cropland[1]	
Component of cropland	**2011**	**2016**
Field crops	18.8	23.7
Hay	58.9	54.8
Vegetables	2.4	2.2
Fruits, berries and nuts	18.7	18.3
Sod and nursery	1.2	1.1
Total cropland	**100.0**	**100.0**

1. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Corn is the leading crop

Corn for grain and corn for silage continued to be the leading field crops by area reported in 2016 in Nova Scotia. As a result of increased profitability and improved varieties, corn for grain area rose 46.2% from 2011 to 20,037 acres in 2016. Increased usage of feed formulation utilizing more corn into feed rations contributed to an 8.9% increase in corn for silage area to 11,452 acres. While Nova Scotia ranked ninth provincially in terms of field crop area, its corn area was the largest in Atlantic Canada.

Table 2
Largest two field crops, Nova Scotia, 2011 and 2016

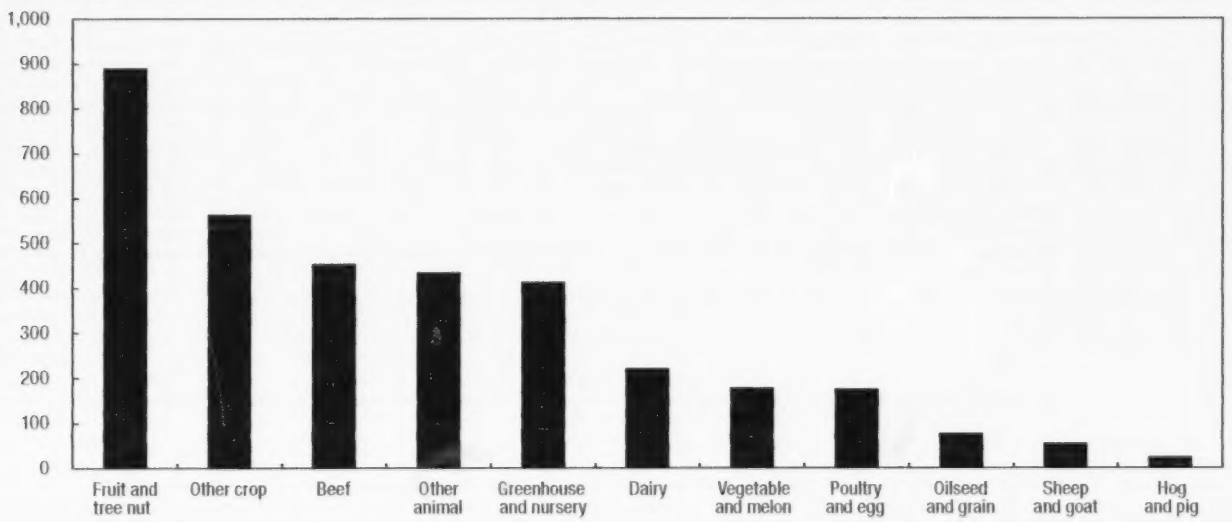
	Acreage	
Field crop	**2011**	**2016**
Corn for grain	13,701	20,037
Corn for silage	10,518	11,452

Source: CANSIM table 004-0213.

Declines in blueberries and apples contribute to reduced area in total fruits, berries and nuts

Fruit and tree nut type operations accounted for over a quarter (25.6%) of farms in the province.

Chart 3
Total number of agricultural operations by operation type, Nova Scotia, 2016



Source: CANSIM table 004-0200.

The total area of land in fruits, berries and nuts decreased 6.7% from 2011 to 48,984 acres in 2016, due in large part to reductions in blueberries (-6.9%) and apples (-16.1%). The decline in the area of land in blueberries occurred as a result of competitive pressures. The presence of fire blight in 2014 was a factor in the reduction of the apple production area.

Despite the decline, blueberries (41,963 acres) remained the principal horticulture crop in terms of area in the province. Blueberries, apples (4,418 acres) and grapes (843 acres) were the leading fruits, berries and nuts commodities in terms of area in Nova Scotia. The area devoted to apples was the largest in Atlantic Canada.

Since 2011, field vegetable area declined by 14.0% to 5,819 acres.

The area dedicated to greenhouse flowers and greenhouse vegetables in Nova Scotia declined 4.0% from 2011 to 1.9 million square feet in 2016, due to a reduction in greenhouse flowers. The greenhouse flower area fell 31.2% to 813,040 square feet in 2016. Meanwhile, the area of greenhouse vegetables increased 38.6% from 2011 to 1.1 million square feet in 2016.

Nova Scotia continues to have the largest mink breeding stock in Canada

The breeding stock of mink in Nova Scotia declined 40.5% from 2011 to 252,871 in 2016 due to lower demand for fur products. However, it still represented the largest breeding stock of mink in the country. Operations typed as fur bearing animal and rabbit farms accounted for $71.5 million in gross farm receipts in 2015.

Despite declines in both dairy and beef cattle, Nova Scotia had the largest cattle herd in Atlantic Canada.

The number of dairy cows in Nova Scotia decreased 4.4% from 2011 to 20,966 head in 2016, while the number of farms reporting dairy cows declined 11.9%.

Annual milk production increased 11.2% from 2011 to 187.7 million litres in 2016 (CANSIM table 003-0011, accessed April 26, 2017). The decline in the number of dairy cows was more than offset by increased production per animal, attributable to improvements in animal nutrition, genetics, and production practices.

The number of beef cattle declined 13.4% to 24,996 head as some producers sold stock to take advantage of higher prices and retire or shift to other types of agricultural production. The number of farms reporting beef cattle declined 17.7%.

The number of pigs in Nova Scotia decreased 15.4% from 2011 to 15,766 head in 2016. Nova Scotia had the ninth largest number of pigs in the country.

The sheep flock declined 21.6% from 2011 to 20,902 animals in 2016.

Nova Scotia has the highest proportion of female operators in Atlantic Canada

Nova Scotia reported 4,630 farm operators in 2016, down 11.2% from 2011 and exceeding the decline in the number of farms (-10.9%).

Women accounted for 27.3% of all Nova Scotia farm operators in 2016—the highest proportion in the Atlantic provinces and up from 25.9% in 2011. Nationally, women accounted for 28.7% of all farm operators in 2016.

From 2011 to 2016, the proportion of farm operators aged 55 years and older rose from 53.9% to 58.8%. However, over the same period, the proportion of young operators (under 35 years old) rose from 6.1% to 6.9%. Over the five-year period, the average age of operators rose from 55.4 years to 56.5 years.

Table 3
Proportion of farm operators by age group, Nova Scotia, 2011 and 2016

	Percent of farm operators[1]	
Age group	**2011**	**2016**
Under 35 years old	6.1	6.9
35 to 54 years old	40.0	34.3
55 years and older	53.9	58.8
Total farm operators	**100.0**	**100.0**

1. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: CANSIM table 004-0239.

In 2015, 30.0% of farm operators in Nova Scotia worked more than 40 hours a week on average on farm operations, compared with 31.5% five-years earlier. At the national level, this percentage was 37.5% in 2015.

At the same time, fewer farmers reported working off the farm. In 2015, 44.7% of Nova Scotia's farm operators had an off farm job, down from 47.6% in 2010. Nationally, 44.4% of farm operators worked off the farm.

Expenses grow faster than gross farm receipts

Gross farm receipts were $693.8 million in 2015, while operating expenses were $616.7 million. On average, for every dollar in receipts, farms had 89 cents in expenses in 2015 for an expense-to-receipt ratio of 0.89. In 2010, Nova Scotia's expense-to-receipt ratio was 0.84.

The expense-to-receipt ratio varied by farm type. The dairy type operations had the most favourable ratio (0.79) in 2015, albeit up from 0.76 in 2010. Hog and pig farming type operations reported the greatest improvement in the expense-to-receipt ratio, declining from 1.10 to 0.93. Conversely, farms typed as other animal production reported the largest deterioration, rising from 0.78 in 2011 to 1.03 in 2015.

Poultry and egg type farms accounted for the largest percentage of gross farm receipts in Nova Scotia, rising from 23.0% in 2010 to 27.0% or $187.2 million in 2015. Dairy cattle and milk production type operations were the second largest contributor to receipts, accounting for 22.1% or $153.3 million.

The expense-to-receipt ratio is the average amount of operating expenses incurred for a dollar in farm receipts. The ratio is calculated in current dollars.

Price indices were used to obtain constant dollar estimates of receipts, expenditures and capital values in order to eliminate the impact of price changes in year-to-year comparison.

Census Day was May 10, 2016. Farmers were asked to report their receipts and expenses for the last complete fiscal or calendar year (2015).

Other agriculture highlights in Nova Scotia

- In Nova Scotia, 4.3% of farms reported having renewable energy producing systems in 2015, compared with 5.3% nationally.
- In Nova Scotia, 20.6% of farms reported being incorporated in 2016, up from 16.9% in 2011. Nationally, incorporated farms accounted for 25.1% of the total farms in 2016.
- The 2016 Census of Agriculture marked the first time farm operators were asked to report whether they had a written succession plan. In 2016, 5.2% of farms in Nova Scotia had a written succession plan compared with 8.4% nationally.
- The proportion of farms producing organic products in Nova Scotia edged up from 1.5% in 2011 to 1.7% in 2016. Nationally, farms producing organic products accounted for 2.2% of the total farms in 2016.
- In Nova Scotia, 5.2% of farms reported using automated environmental controls technology for animal housing in 2015.
- In Nova Scotia, the average value of the land and buildings per acre increased 9.4% (in 2016 constant dollars) from 2011 to $2,096 in 2016, but was below the national level of $2,696 per acre.
- In Nova Scotia, 23.6% of farms reported selling agricultural products directly to consumers in 2015.

Canada 150: Farming in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia was one of the original four provinces in Canada in 1867. In 1871, the first census after Confederation, 387,800 people lived in Nova Scotia and there were 46,316 farms reported in the province, accounting for 12.6% of all farms in the country. In that year, Nova Scotia reported the second-lowest number of mink in the country with 4,269. Today, Nova Scotia is the national leader in mink production with a breeding stock of 252,871 mink reported in 2016, 59 times more than in 1871.

Statistics Canada would like to thank the farming community of Nova Scotia for their participation and assistance in the 2016 Census of Agriculture.

Census farm: An operation is considered a census farm (agricultural operation) if it produces at least one of the following products intended for sale:

- crops: hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed;
- livestock: cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock;
- poultry: hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry;
- animal products: milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat;
- other agricultural products: Christmas trees, sod, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, honey or bees, maple syrup and its products.

The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are not included in the national totals because of the different definition of an agricultural operation in the territories and confidentiality constraints. The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are presented separately.

Farm type: Farm type is established through a procedure that classifies each census farm according to the predominant type of production. This is done by estimating the potential receipts from the inventories of crops and livestock reported on the questionnaire and determining the product or group of products that make up the majority of the estimated receipts. For example, a census farm with total potential receipts of 60% from hogs, 20% from beef cattle and 20% from wheat, would be classified as a hog and pig farm. The farm types presented in this document are derived based on the 2012 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).

P.T.O. hp (Power Take Off horsepower): The measure of the power available from a tractor engine to drive implements.

Gross farm receipts: The Census of Agriculture measures gross farm receipts for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Gross farm receipts (before deducting expenses) in this analysis include:

- receipts from all agricultural products sold;
- program payments and custom work receipts.

The following are not included in gross farm receipts:

- sales of forestry products (for example: firewood, pulpwood, logs, fence posts and pilings);
- sales of capital items (for example: quota, land, machinery);
- receipts from the sale of any goods purchased only for retail sales.

Total operating expenses: The Census of Agriculture measures operating expenses for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Total operating expenses include:

- any expense associated with producing agricultural products (such as the cost of seed, feed, fuel, fertilizers, etc.).

The following are not included in total operating expenses:

- the purchase of land, buildings or equipment;
- depreciation or capital cost allowance. Depreciation represents economic "wear and tear" expense. Capital cost allowance represents the amount of depreciation written off by the tax filer as allowed by tax regulations.

2010 to 2015: Some data refer to a reference period other than Census Day. For example, for financial data the reference period is the calendar or accounting (fiscal) year prior to the census.

Farm operator: According to the census, a farm operator is any person responsible for the management decisions made for an agricultural operation as of May 10, 2016.

Contact information

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).